



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

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DATE: November 28, 2006

MEMO CODE: TA 01-2007

SUBJECT: Determining Creditability of Breakfast Cereals for Child Nutrition Programs

TO: Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Agencies  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

This memo serves two purposes:

1. Reviews existing FNS guidance applicable to breakfast cereals; and
2. Provides an *additional* option to help determine if breakfast cereals that do not indicate they are enriched or fortified (either ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook), are creditable towards the grains/breads component for reimbursable meals served to children ages one and older under a food-based menu planning approach.

**Existing FNS Guidance:**

The *FCS<sup>1</sup> Grains/Breads Instruction 783.1 Rev 2* and the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG), section three, provide current guidance on crediting of grains/breads products. These guidance documents are still valid. Specifically, the flow chart in section three, on page 3-7 in the FBG is based on the *Grains/Breads Instruction* and provides several options to determine creditability of breakfast cereals. A breakfast cereal is creditable if any of the following are true:

- 1) the cereal is labeled as whole grain (100% of the grain component is whole grain)<sup>2</sup>;
- 2) the cereal is labeled as “enriched”;
- 3) the cereal is labeled as “fortified”;
- 4) the ingredient statement shows that the primary grain ingredient is either whole grain, enriched flour or meal, bran, or germ; or
- 5) manufacturer documentation provides the gram amount of creditable grains per serving.

**New Problem with Crediting Breakfast Cereals**

Some cereal manufacturers no longer attach the words “fortified” or “enriched” to the name of the cereal on the label. In addition, some cereal manufacturers are adding the words

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<sup>1</sup> The agency name was Food and Consumer Service at the time the instruction was revised. The official title of the instruction is used here.

<sup>2</sup> The intent of question one of the flow chart and section I of the Grains/Breads Instruction is to identify products having whole grain as 100% of the grain component. The examples given in the flow chart (whole wheat bread,” whole wheat rolls,” etc.) were based on products having a standard of identity requiring the grain component to be 100% whole grain. Most cereals do not have a standard of identity and the words “whole grain” or “made with whole grain” in the product label *do not* indicate that the grain component is 100% whole grain. For cereals to meet the requirement of question one of the flow chart or section I of the Grains/Breads Instruction, 100% of the grain component must be whole grain.

“whole grain” or “made with whole grain” to the product label even if the grain component is not 100% whole grain. This makes it difficult to determine if the cereal is creditable.

**Another Option for Determining the Creditability of Breakfast Cereals:**

If the cereal label does not give enough information to complete the steps in the FBG flow chart mentioned above, you may use the nutrient criteria FNS has provided as a sixth option for determining creditability of breakfast cereals.

To provide consistency in determining grains/breads creditability, FNS has established nutrient criteria for breakfast cereals (hereafter referred to as FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals) based on the minimum required amounts of selected nutrients in one slice of enriched bread. This nutrient profile is not intended to set a standard of identity for breakfast cereals or any other grains/breads product; it only provides guidance for the CN programs in determining if a breakfast cereal is a creditable grains/bread component of reimbursable meals served under food-based menu planning.

The FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals do not replace the guidance in the *Grains/Breads Instruction* or FBG; they just provide an additional option. In other words, if a breakfast cereal is determined to be creditable using the *Grains/Breads Instruction* or the FBG flowchart<sup>2</sup>, the cereal remains creditable even if the product does not meet any or all of the five nutrient criteria outlined in this memo. It is expected that cereal creditability will be first determined using the *Grains/Breads Instruction* or the FBG and that the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals will be used as a last option. If you need to use the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals to determine creditability, then the product must contain the minimum levels of all five nutrients (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid, and iron) listed.

<b>FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals Served to Children Ages One and Older</b>					
<b>Required Nutrient</b>	<b>Cereal Portion Size</b>		<b>Minimum % Daily Value (%DV) of Nutrient per Portion</b>	or	<b>Minimum Weight of Nutrient per Portion</b>
	<b>Ready-to-Eat (whichever amount weighs less)</b>	<b>Ready-to-Cook</b>			
Thiamin (B1)	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	6.7 %	or	0.10 mg
Riboflavin (B2)	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	3.5 %	or	0.06 mg
Niacin (B3)	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	4.2 %	or	0.84 mg
Folic Acid (B9)	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	5.0 %	or	20.0 mcg
Iron	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	3.9 %	or	0.70 mg

It is important to note that the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals are set for specific portion sizes. The portion size for ready-to-eat breakfast cereals is one ounce **or** 3/4 cup, whichever amount weighs less. The portion size for cooked cereal is 25 grams of ready-to-cook,

dry cereal regardless of the amount of cooked cereal served or the amount of liquid added to cook the cereal.

If the serving size on the Nutrition Facts Label *matches the cereal portion size listed* in the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals chart, then you can compare the nutrients listed on the Nutrition Facts Label to the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals.

If the serving size does ***not match the cereal portion size listed*** in the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals chart, then you will need to convert the nutrient values from the label to determine the amount of nutrients in the required cereal portion size.

You can convert the nutrient values using the online USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Nutrient Data Laboratory, National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference or you can manually calculate the nutrient values. We recommend that you use the ARS National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference. Procedures for converting the nutrient values per portion size are described in Attachments A, B, and C. If you have questions related to this guidance or need assistance in converting the nutrients in a specific cereal, please contact your Regional office.

Sincerely,

**Original Signed**

STANLEY C. GARNETT  
Director  
Child Nutrition Division

cc: Regional Offices

